

## February 25, 2009 - Murtha: House Passes Omnibus Appropriations Bill, Funding Included for Western Pennsylvania Programs

WASHINGTON, D.C.

-- Congressman John P. Murtha, Chairman of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Defense, announced today that the House of Representatives has passed a \$410 billion Omnibus Appropriations Bill that wraps up work on the remaining fiscal year 2009 appropriations bills (note: excluded from this omnibus appropriations bill are the FY09 Defense, Homeland Security, and Military Construction/VA appropriations bills, which became law in September 2008). Murtha voted in favor of the omnibus appropriations bill, and it passed the House 245-178.

"This Omnibus Appropriations Bill provides funding for those federal agencies that have been operating without a budget for the current fiscal year," commented Murtha. "This legislation provides funding for worthy projects that benefit our community and improve the quality-of-life in our region."

Murtha was successful in securing funding in the FY09 Omnibus Appropriations Bill for the following programs:

### Agriculture

Included within the FY09 Agriculture Appropriations bill is \$207,000 for Natural Biodiversity, Johnstown, Cambria County, to continue their efforts to restore stream-bank habitat and improve water quality in the Kiski-Conemaugh River Basin and adjacent areas. This award-winning project has restored more than 100 acres of recreation areas and stream banks that had previously been overgrown with non-native, invasive plant species. This funding will allow them to expand these

efforts, provide technical assistance to private efforts to eradicate invasive species, and to explore the potential of creating a nursery for native species for these wetland areas.

## Commerce, Justice, Science

Included within the FY09 Commerce, Justice, Science Appropriations bill is \$2,000,000 for the Southwestern Pennsylvania Law Enforcement Technologies program. This program supports police departments in Allegheny, Armstrong, Cambria, Fayette, Greene, Indiana, Somerset, Washington and Westmoreland Counties with grants to purchase computers, communication devices, police vehicles and other necessary equipment, as well as provide necessary training to ensure officer safety. Because of budget cuts, small police departments and other emergency responders are finding it nearly impossible to make these upgrades, which are essential to effectively handling emergencies, disasters, and even routine calls.

The appropriations bill also includes \$1,100,000 for a Correctional Education Clearinghouse and Educational Program at Indiana University of Pennsylvania (IUP). This program will create a data collection system to provide the only nationwide comparison of analytical correctional educational data that will be used to develop and implement a customized graduate level program designed specifically for correctional educators. Their goal is to establish the nation's first certification program for correctional educators.

Also included in the appropriations bill is \$350,000 for the Center for Global Competitiveness at Saint Francis University and Saint Vincent College. Since 1993, the Center has assisted small businesses throughout the region in exploring new and expanded international and domestic marketing opportunities. Services made available through the Center include individualized marketing consulting, international trade assistance, international trade event promotion, videoconferencing facilities, global assistance grants, training seminars and newsletters.

## Energy and Water

Included within the FY09 Energy and Water Appropriations

bill is \$15,900,000 for the general construction of Locks & Dams 2, 3 and 4 on the Monongahela River.

The appropriations bill also includes \$25,800,000 for general construction of the Emsworth Locks & Dams and \$600,000 for general construction of the Grays Landing Locks & Dams in Masontown, PA.

Also included in the appropriations bill is \$8,000,000 for the South Central Pennsylvania Environmental Infrastructure Program. This program provides the Army Corps of Engineers with the funding to design and construct projects for wastewater treatment, water supply, storage, and water resource protection and development in Allegheny, Armstrong, Cambria, Greene, Fayette, Indiana, Somerset, Washington and Westmoreland Counties.

“The Environment Infrastructure Program has helped thousands of Pennsylvania residents and businesses gain access to clean and reliable water sources,” said Murtha. “At the same time, these projects improve the environmental quality of our rivers and streams by fixing or replacing malfunctioning septic systems that release raw sewage into our waterways.”

The appropriations bill also includes \$2,000,000 for the West Virginia and Pennsylvania Flood Control Program. This funding will be used by the Army Corps to improve flood control, stream bank protection, storm water management, and channel clearing measures in the Lower Allegheny and Lower Monongahela River Basins.

Also included in the appropriations bill is \$2,250,000 for operations and maintenance of the Johnstown Local Flood Protection Project. The project includes sediment removal, channel clearing, concrete slope lining and toe repairs, and repairs to safety railings.

Financial Services and General  
Government

Included

within the FY09 Financial Services Appropriations bill is \$147,386 for the Economic Growth Connection (EGC) Procurement Assistance Program. The EGC assists businesses in Westmoreland and Fayette Counties with identifying government bids, contract awards and foreign business opportunities. They also compile a database of regional manufacturing capabilities to match business needs with local services.

Also

included in the appropriations bill is \$147,386 for the Johnstown Area Regional Industries (JARI) Incubator and Workforce Development program. The program provides marketing analysis, advertising, accounting, loan packaging, bid preparation and executive training sessions to small businesses and educational institutions in the Cambria and Somerset County region. The incubator project provides the next generation of businesses and industries in Southwestern Pennsylvania with the managerial guidance and facility space they need to establish a prospering small business.

&ldquo;Both

JARI and the EGC work tirelessly to attract new businesses to our region,&rdquo; said Murtha. &ldquo;This funding will assist their efforts, as well as provide existing businesses with a broad range of support services.&rdquo;

Interior  
and the Environment

Included

within the FY09 Interior and the Environment Appropriations bill is \$1,000,000 for the Vestaburg-New Hill Sanitary Sewer System Project, Washington County. The current area utilizes malfunctioning on-lot systems and wildcat sewer systems that discharge raw sewage directly into the Monongahela River. This project provides construction of approximately 35,670 linear feet of 6&rdquo; and 8&rdquo; sanitary sewer lines along with installation of 141 manholes and related equipment.

Also

included in the appropriations bill is \$1,000,000 for the Dunbar Township Municipal Authority Sewer Project, Fayette County. The completion of this project would eliminate on-lot malfunctioning systems in the City of Connellsville into Dunbar Township, along SR 119 and three established villages (Wheeler, Morrell, and Monarch). Public infrastructure is

essential to provide both residential and commercial growth in these areas.

The Appropriations bill also includes \$200,000 for the Ralphton Water Project, Somerset County, PA. Currently, residents suffer from a lack of safe drinking water due to malfunctioning sewage systems and groundwater that is contaminated with bacteria and mine seepage.

The Village of Ralphton consistently runs out of water even when water conservation practices are in place. A 21,000 foot 6-inch water line, along with fire hydrants and pump stations, will link the village of Ralphton with the Municipal Water Authority of the Township of Jenner.

## Labor, Health and Education

Included within the FY09 Labor, Health and Education Appropriations bill is \$381,000 for the expansion of the emergency department at Washington Hospital. Every year, Washington Hospital treats nearly 11,000 patients in their emergency department. With rising demand and visits, the hospital is undertaking a significant renovation and expansion of the emergency department, which will ensure that patients receive quality and timely care.

The Appropriations bill also includes \$381,000 for the expansion of the emergency department at Highlands Hospital, Fayette County. The current emergency department was constructed in 1963 and this expansion project will improve patient safety and infection control, increase patient privacy, and include separate secured entrances/ambulance bays, waiting rooms, a trauma room, and updated HVAC systems.

Also included within the Appropriations bill is \$143,000 to continue development of a comprehensive community-based geriatric care program at Excelsa Health

Frick Hospital,  
Westmoreland County.

Serving an increasing elderly population, living with at least one chronic disease, Excelsa Health is creating multiple community-based geriatric care units including an Alzheimer's Personal Care Unit, a Geriatric-Psychiatry Unit, and an Intensive Out-Patient Program.

Murtha was successful at securing \$341,000 for the program in last year's budget.

The Appropriations bill also includes \$381,000 for the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) Career Centers, located in southwestern Pennsylvania and West Virginia. The UMWA Career Centers provide training for dislocated miners, who must be retrained with the skills necessary to meet the demands of the local labor market. They also have created a training program, in collaboration with Penn State University and West Virginia University, to provide the next generation of miners with skills in underground electrical training, mechanical and diesel training, mine examiner training, mine disaster training, and mine safety training.

"More than half of the country's electricity is generated from coal," noted Murtha. "With electricity usage continuing to grow, and with the development of clean-coal technologies, it is essential that we train the next generation of America's coal miners to meet our future demands. We must also provide retraining programs for those miners who have lost their jobs so that they are able to obtain new jobs within their community."

Also included in the Appropriations bill is \$323,000 for the Veteran Community Initiatives to continue providing programs to area veterans dealing with hands-on job search assistance, job retraining, psychological counseling, physiological rehabilitation referral services for veterans and their family members, resume preparation, job fairs, employer outreach, formal/informal re-adjustment counseling sessions, and daily living assistance initiatives. This funding will be used to expand their services from a three-county area to an eleven-county area in western Pennsylvania.

## Transportation, Housing, and Urban Development

Included within the FY09 Transportation, Housing, and Urban Development Appropriations bill is \$950,000 for the Westmoreland County Transit Authority to purchase new vehicles and to renovate their maintenance facility, which includes the expansion of bus maintenance bays, construction of a covered bus storage area, construction of an automatic bus wash and other facility upgrades.

Also included within the Appropriations bill is \$760,000 for the Mid Mon Valley Transit Authority to purchase new express

buses that will allow residents of the Mon Valley to have a reliable and cost-effective link to Pittsburgh for employment/medical/education/etc. opportunities.

The Appropriations bill also includes \$285,000 for the Cambria County Transit Authority (CamTran) to replace their aging vehicle wash system and to make upgrades to the Authority's Radio Communications System.

Also included within the Appropriations bill is \$95,000 for the Fayette Area Coordinated Transportation to construct an additional bus storage garage to meet the county's growing fleet of buses.

The Appropriations bill also includes \$760,000 for the continuation of the Mon/Fayette Expressway, the Uniontown to Brownsville section in Fayette County.